United Nations

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-fourth Session
Supplement No. 34 (A/54/34)

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-fourth Session
Supplement No. 34 (A/54/34)

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

United Nations • New York, 1999

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

ISSN 0255-1969

[Original: English]

[12 March 1999]

Contents

Chapter		*Paragraphs*	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–5	1
II.	Participating organizations	6	2
III.	Composition of the Joint Inspection Unit	7–8	3
IV.	Secretariat	9	4
V.	Programme of work	10–13	5
VI.	Measures to further enhance the functioning and impact of the Joint Inspection Unit	14–22	6
	A. Leadership	15–16	6
	B. Staff resource requirements	17–18	6
	C. Administrative and budgetary operational independence	19–21	7
	D. Reporting procedure	22	7
VII.	Relations and cooperation with Member States, participating organizations and other oversight bodies	23–29	8
	A. Member States	23	8
	B. Participating organizations	24–25	8
	C. Other oversight bodies	26–29	8
Annex			
	Joint Inspection Unit reports issued during the reporting period		10

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) was created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966. On 1 January 1978, the statute of the Unit, as adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, took effect. By this action, the Unit became a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the legislative organs of the other organizations within the United Nations system that have accepted the statute of the Unit. Those organizations, hereinafter referred to as the participating organizations, are listed in chapter II of the present report.

2. The Unit is composed of 11 Inspectors having experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions, and are appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. They serve in their personal capacity for a term of five years, renewable once. The Inspectors have the broadest powers of investigation in all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of services and the proper use of resources and may make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. They are also mandated to inspect and evaluate the activities of the participating organizations and make recommendations aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination among those organizations.

3. The main purpose of the Unit is to enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system. According to its statute, the Unit shall, *inter alia*, satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the participating organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of resources available for carrying out their activities.

4. The Unit prepares reports, notes and confidential letters addressed to one or more organizations and/or of interest to the United Nations system as a whole. In addition, the Unit submits an annual report to the General Assembly and to the legislative organs of the participating organizations.

5. As indicated in its note of 15 July 1998 (see A/53/180), the Unit decided to revert to its previous January–December cycle for its annual report and its programme of work; the present report, which covers the period from 1 July 1997 to 31 December 1998, is the thirtieth of its kind prepared by the Unit since its establishment.

Chapter II
Participating organizations

6. The following organizations have accepted the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit:

United Nations, including its affiliated bodies*

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

---

* United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)
World Food Programme (WFP)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Chapter III
Composition of the Joint Inspection Unit

7. The composition of the Unit as at 31 December 1998 was as follows:

Mr. Francesco Mezzalama(Italy),*** Chairman
Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski(Poland),** Vice-Chairman

Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria),***
Mr. John D. Fox (United States of America)**
Mr. Homero L. Hernández-Sánchez (Dominican Republic)***
Mr. Eduard Kudryavtsev (Russian Federation)***
Mr. Sumihiro Kuyama (Japan)*****
Mr. Wolfgang Münch (Germany)**
Mr. Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)**
Mr. Khalil I. Othman (Jordan)***
Mr. Raúl Quijano (Argentina)*

8. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, the Unit elected Mr. Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo as Chairman and Mr. Sumihiro Kuyama as Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 1999. Mr. Armando Duque González (Colombia)**** replaced Mr. Raúl Quijano, effective 1 January 1999.

---

* Term of office expired on 31 December 1998.
** Term of office expires on 31 December 2000.
*** Term of office expires on 31 December 2002.
**** Term of office expires on 31 December 2003.
***** Term of office expires on 31 December 2004.

Chapter IV
Secretariat

9. The Joint Inspection Unit is assisted by a secretariat that consists of an Executive Secretary (D-2), eight research officers (two P-5, two P-4, two P-3 and two P-2), one information technology officer (P-3), three research assistants (one G-7 and two G-6), and six other General Service staff.

Chapter V

Programme of work

10. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 50/233 of 7 June 1996, the General Assembly invited the Unit to continue to take full advantage of its system-wide competence in undertaking comparative analyses of trends and problems faced by various organizations and to propose harmonized, practical and concrete solutions. The Unit has been attentive to that invitation and has continued to focus on system-wide issues.

11. During the reporting period the Unit produced nine reports, most of which are of system-wide scope.

12. Of the total of 11 new topics included in the 1999 programme of work, six topics concern the United Nations and/or its affiliated bodies, three are system- wide, one concerns several organizations and one concerns a single organization other than the United Nations.

13. The Unit's work programme is flexible enough to allow for changes in response to new emerging priority issues. The list of potential reports for the year 2000 and beyond is only tentative at this stage.

Chapter VI

Measures to further enhance the functioning and impact of the Joint Inspection Unit

14. In its previous annual reports, the Unit provided the General Assembly and the legislative organs of its participating organizations with a detailed account of its efforts made to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 48/221 and 50/233. The Unit has endeavoured to pursue such efforts and has, on its own, dealt with the issue of leadership. Nevertheless, there remain certain issues which the Unit itself cannot resolve and which require decisions by the Member States.

A. Leadership

15. Article 18 of the statute stipulates that the Chairman of the Unit "shall play a coordinating role in respect of the Unit's programme of work for the year"; that he "shall be the formal channel of communication with the competent bodies and the executive heads of the organizations" and that he "shall represent the Unit, as necessary, at meetings of the organizations and perform on the Unit's behalf such other functions as it may decide". While bearing in mind these provisions, it should also be stressed that, under the current statute, all Inspectors are nominated in the same manner, called upon to "discharge their duties in full independence" (article 7), and to "to draw up, over their own signature, reports for which they are responsible" (article 11). The Unit considers therefore that leadership by the Chairman should be based on delegated authority from other Inspectors in the interest of proper coordination and implementation of the approved programme of work. Thus, effective leadership cannot and should not be "imposed" but, rather, be derived from the collective wisdom and choice of the Inspectors themselves.

16. In its 1995 annual report,[1] the Unit indicated that, within the context of article 18 of its statute, it was studying ways of having more effective leadership roles by its Chairman and Vice-Chairman, including modifying the rotational practice. In its 1997 annual report,[2] the Unit informed the General Assembly that it had decided that, starting in 1999, the election of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman would not follow the existing practice of regional rotation for a one-year term. The current Chairman and Vice-Chairman have, therefore, been elected according to the new practice.

B. Staff resource requirements

17. Since 1978, the Unit (currently composed of 11 Inspectors) has been assisted by an Executive Secretary and staff as authorized under the regular budget of the United Nations. Despite a more diversified programme of activities, the level of total staff resources has remained unchanged since 1968, when the Unit was initially established on an experimental basis with a membership of eight Inspectors. For the biennium 1998–1999, the Unit's Secretariat consists of an Executive Secretary (D-2), eight research officers (two P-5, two P-4, two P-3 and two P-2), one information technology officer (P-3), three research assistants (one G-7 and two G-6) and six other General Service staff.

18. Clearly, a case can be made for the need to increase the staffing resources of the Unit. The General Assembly itself recognized that there was a need for strengthening external oversight mechanisms in general, and the Unit in particular (resolution 48/221 of 23 December 1993). Conscious of the financial constraints faced by all its participating

organizations, the Unit has refrained from reiterating requests to strengthen its staffing capacities. Its budget for the biennium 1998–1999 shows a negative growth while the proposed budget for 2000–2001 has a zero growth target. **Serious consideration should be given in the future to more appropriate resources requirements to allow the Unit to better discharge its mandate.**

C. Administrative and budgetary operational independence

19. Article 20.1 of the statute describes clearly the procedure to be followed for the consideration of the budget of the Unit. In the opinion of the Unit, that procedure, if strictly adhered to, implies that proposals made by the Unit should be used by the Secretary-General to establish, after consultation with the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the budget estimates for the Unit which are incorporated into the overall budget submission to the General Assembly. The big difference between JIU and other budget entities would be that its budget estimates would be submitted together with (a) a report thereon by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, allowing the Committee to agree or disagree with the proposals made by the Unit, and (b) the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on both the proposals of the Unit and the related comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The obvious objective, by letting the Member States themselves, as a whole, be the final judges of proposals made by the Unit, is to ensure that the independence of the Unit is not jeopardized by the inspectees through the budgetary process.

20. The implementation of the pertinent provisions of article 20 of the statute by the Secretariat does compromise the Unit's operational independence, and **the General Assembly may wish to clarify the provision of article 20.1 of the Joint Inspection Unit statute**.

21. In this connection, the Unit recalls that, although the Office of Internal Oversight Services is an internal oversight mechanism, the need for it to enjoy administrative and budgetary operational independence has been recognized both by the General Assembly, in resolution 48/218 B, and by the Secretary-General (ST/SGB/273).

D. Reporting procedure

22. Article 11.4 of the statute stipulates the procedures for the handling and consideration of JIU reports. In this regard, the Unit would like to remind the General Assembly once again that it submitted, in its 1997 annual report[3] an official proposal entitled "Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit" for consideration and action by the legislative organs of its participating organizations. Unfortunately, **no action has been taken so far on that proposal**. Its endorsement by the General Assembly, which is being awaited by other legislative organs, would give the Unit an important tool to enhance its functioning and better assess its impact.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/50/34), para. 48.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/52/34), para. 27.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

Chapter VII

Relations and cooperation with Member States, participating organizations and other oversight bodies

A. Member States

23. A meeting on shared responsibilities for oversight was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and Other International Organizations at Geneva in June 1998 with the participation of the Unit, representatives from Member States and officials from a number of participating organizations based in Geneva.

B. Participating organizations

24. Meetings were held by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Inspectors with the executive heads of the participating organizations and other high-level officials of the United Nations system to exchange views on issues of common interest and in connection with the preparation of JIU reports.

25. During the reporting period, a number of JIU reports were taken up by the legislative organs of the participating organizations where the Inspectors concerned introduced or otherwise discussed the reports and/or followed up on their deliberations. Those legislative organs included:

(a) The General Assembly, in which seven reports were introduced by the Inspectors concerned, considered and acted upon;

(b) The legislative organs of ILO, UNESCO, WHO, IMO, UNIDO and WFP, where 31 reports were taken up, with the participation of the Inspectors concerned, and, in some cases, acted upon.

C. Other oversight bodies

26. The Unit maintained close bilateral working relations with the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services so that all three could benefit mutually from each other's experience. With a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination among oversight bodies, and thus avoiding potential duplications and overlapping in their programmes, the Vice-Chairman, a number of Inspectors and the Executive Secretary together participated in the first and second tripartite (Joint Inspection Unit, Office of Internal Oversight Services and Board of Auditors) oversight coordination meetings, held at United Nations Headquarters in November 1997 and November 1998, respectively. The agenda of those meetings included, *inter alia*, the improvement of personal accountability, the use of information technology by oversight bodies, and the internal audit coverage of jointly-funded organizations within the United Nations common system. The Unit will organize the 1999 tripartite meeting.

27. The Inspectors also met informally with the external and the internal auditors of a number of specialized agencies.

28. During the reporting period, the Unit also participated in the twenty-ninth meeting of the representatives of internal audit services of the United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions, held at Geneva in May 1998.

29. A substantive joint meeting of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Joint Inspection Unit was held at Geneva on 10 June 1998, devoted to discussing ways of further strengthening cooperation between the two bodies. The Unit received ideas from the Advisory Committee for subjects to be taken up in future JIU work programmes.

Annex

Joint Inspection Unit reports issued during the reporting period

A/52/270	Execution of humanitarian assistance programmes through implementing partners (JIU/REP/97/3)
A/52/338	The challenge of outsourcing for the United Nations system (JIU/REP/97/5)
A/52/430	Coordination at Headquarters and field level between the United Nations agencies involved in peace-building: an assessment of possibilities (JIU/REP/97/4)
A/52/559	Training institutions in the United Nations system: programmes and activities (JIU/REP/97/6)
A/53/154	Fellowships in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/98/1)
A/53/171	More coherence for enhanced oversight in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/98/2)
A/53/392	The United Nations University: enhancing its relevance and effectiveness (JIU/REP/98/3)
	United Nations system common services in Geneva (JIU/REP/98/4)
	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS): broader engagement with United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/98/5)

99-08904 (E) 160499